

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group 1, claim(s) 1-18, 28-30, drawn to a substrate processing apparatus/method including a suction unit.

Group 2, claim(s) 19-27 and 34-36, drawn to drawn to a substrate processing apparatus/method including first and second gas nozzles, first and second liquid nozzles and first and second moving mechanisms.

Group 3, claim(s) 31-33, drawn to a substrate processing method including a fluid supply, a gas supply nozzle, a moving mechanism and a suction unit.

Group 4, claim(s) 37-56, drawn to a substrate processing apparatus/method having a substrate holder and a fluid supply port and suction port, both being close to the substrate.

Group 5, claim(s) 56-61, drawn to a substrate holding apparatus having a plurality of rollers and a moving mechanism.

2. The inventions listed as Groups 1-5 do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: Group 1 has a suction unit without any nozzles or moving mechanisms, whereas all of groups 2-5 either do not have a suction unit or have a suction unit incorporated with moving gas and fluid nozzles. Group 2 has 2 gas nozzles and 2 fluid nozzle, one of each being positioned above and below the substrate, as well as a moving mechanism for each pair of gas and liquid nozzles, whereas none of groups 1 or 3-5 have 2 of each gas and liquid nozzles or nozzles on the top and bottom of the substrate. Group 3 has a substrate holder, a fluid nozzle, a gas nozzle and a suction unit, whereas none of

Art Unit: 3723

groups 1, 2, 4 or 5 include a suction unit in combination with fluid and gas nozzles. Group 4 includes a fluid supply port and a gas supply port, which are both positioned closely to the substrate, whereas none of groups 1-3 or 5 include fluid and gas supply ports that are close to the substrate. Group 5 is a substrate holding apparatus including rollers, whereas none of groups 1-4 includes rollers.

3. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species or invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

The election of an invention or species may be made with or without traverse. To reserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse.

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the inventions or species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the inventions or species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C.103(a) of the other invention.

4. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim

Art Unit: 3723

remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bryan R. Muller whose telephone number is (571) 272-4489. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Thursday and second Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph J. Hail III can be reached on (571) 272-4485. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Bryan R Muller/
Examiner, Art Unit 3723
11/26/2007